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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 1987

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR BOB DOLE
PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON AIDS
September 30, 1987

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH THIS PANEL. YOUR PRESENCE ON CAPITOL HILL TODAY REPRESENTS THE KIND OF COOPERATION THAT WILL BE NEEDED TO BATTLE THE NATIONAL AIDS CRISIS. THE WHITE HOUSE WON'T HAVE THE FINAL WORD, NOR WILL CONGRESS, OR ANY ONE SENATOR. BUT WORKING TOGETHER WE CAN GET THE JOB DONE.

WITH PROFOUND MEDICAL, MORAL, LEGAL AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS ON THE LINE, WE NEED A BROAD BASED COMMISSION - AN INDEPENDENT BODY - THAT WILL HELP US CUT THROUGH THE POLITICS FOR THE GOOD OF THE NATION.

BUT LET'S FACE IT, THIS IS JUST A TINY LITTLE FIRST STEP. THE CHALLENGES AHEAD ARE ENORMOUS; PROBABLY BEYOND OUR COMPREHENSION. AND IT ISN'T JUST OUR CONCERN - IT'S AN INTERNATIONAL ANXIETY.

IT IS CLEAR THAT SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH SHOULD RECEIVE THE HIGHEST PRIORITY. ONLY BY THE DEVELOPMENT OF A VACCINE OR A SUCCESSFUL METHOD OF TREATMENT FOR EVERYONE, WILL WE REACH OUR GOAL OF ELIMINATING THE SPREAD OF THE DISEASE. I AM PERSONALLY COMMITTED TO ALLOCATING THE NECESSARY RESOURCES, AND AM EQUALLY CONVINCED THAT MY COLLEAGUES IN THE CONGRESS HOLD A SIMILAR VIEW. BUT LET ME UNDERSCORE MY BOTTOM LINE AROUND THIS PLACE: WE ARE GOING TO WATCH HOW THE TAXPAYERS DOLLARS ARE SPENT - WASTE AND ABUSE APPLIES TO AIDS AS MUCH AS IT DOES TO THE PENTAGON.

I HAVE NOTICED WITH SOME REGRET, THAT THERE IS NO REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE PHARMACEUTICAL WORLD ON THE COMMISSION. I WOULD ENCOURAGE YOU TO SEEK ADVICE FROM THIS VERY IMPORTANT INDUSTRY. RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF AIDS DRUGS IS AN OBVIOUS KEY TO UNLOCKING THE AIDS MYSTERY.

WITH RESPECT TO DISCRIMINATION, I AM NOT CONVINCED THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD BE JUST A SPECTATOR. NO DOUBT ABOUT IT, THE STATES WILL HAVE TO BE MAJOR PLAYERS WHEN IT COMES TO CONFIDENTIALITY, EDUCATION AND DISCRIMINATION. BUT EXPERIENCE WITH OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS - SUCH AS THE DISABLED - TELLS US THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN PLAY A LEADERSHIP ROLE. WE SIMPLY CAN'T DISCARD THE FEDERAL ROLE OUT OF HAND.

BUT AS EVERYTHING ELSE IN THE AIDS CHALLENGE, IT WILL HAVE TO BE A PARTNERSHIP. STATES AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT WORKING TOGETHER.

FUNDAMENTALLY, THE GOAL HAS TO BE THE BALANCING OF THE NEEDS OF THOSE WHO ARE INFECTED, WITH THE NEEDS OF THOSE WHO ARE NOT. AS FAR AS A NATIONAL STANDARD GOES, WE MUST PROCEED WITH ALL DELIBERATE CAUTION.

CAUTION WILL ALSO APPLY TO CONFIDENTIALITY. THERE ARE THOSE WHO HAVE A LEGITIMATE NEED TO KNOW, SUCH AS HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS WHO HAVE DIRECT RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CARE AND WELL BEING OF THE PATIENT AS WELL AS SPOUSES. BUT NEEDLESS VIOLATIONS OF CONFIDENTIALITY AND DISCRIMINATION CAN BE DEADLY SIDE EFFECTS OF THE AIDS DILEMMA.

EVERYWHERE I GO THESE DAYS, AIDS IS A SUBJECT OF CONVERSATION. THERE IS EMOTION, AND FEAR, AND MISUNDERSTANDING. THERE ARE NO EASY ANSWERS. BUT AMERICANS ARE EXPECTING LEADERSHIP.

LET'S KEEP WORKING TOGETHER. IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO GO.